



Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests

903 3rd Street

Kamiah, Idaho 83536

Web: www.fs.usda.gov/nezperceclearwater

News Release

Media Contact: (208) 983-5143
lasmith02@fs.fed.us



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Summary of the DRAMVU Final EIS and Draft ROD - What is changing for Forest Visitors?

Kamiah, Idaho (February 22, 2016) – Cheryl Probert, Forest Supervisor for the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests, is releasing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Draft Record of Decision (ROD) for the **Designated Routes and Areas for Motor Vehicle Use (DRAMVU) project**. The DRAMVU project designates roads and trails open for motorized travel on the Nez Perce side of the Forests, in north central Idaho. In the Draft ROD, Forest Supervisor Probert proposes to select Alternative 5, as Modified, which is summarized below. The Final EIS documents information used to support the draft decision.

Because this proposed decision changes how Forest visitors use the Nez Perce National Forest, we are running a three-part series to inform Forest stakeholders about Travel Management. Last November we addressed “What is Travel Management and why did the Forests prepare the Travel Management plans?” This second series summarizes the proposed decision and what is changing for Forest visitors in the future – such as enforcement, access to private inholdings, firewood gathering, camping, and game retrieval. The final in the series will cover “How do you use a Motor Vehicle Use Map? “

Decision Summary (Alternative 5, as Modified)

The selected alternatives, Alternative 5, as Modified, reflects a mix of motorized and non-motorized opportunities that seem to best fit the landscape and natural resources of the forest. In addition, it complies with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies. Alternative 5, as Modified, reflects the alternatives considered in the FEIS and consideration of public comments received on the Draft EIS and Supplemental Draft EIS. The draft decision does not propose to decommission roads or trails on the forest nor does it designate use for over-snow vehicles.

Alternative 5, as Modified, designates 2,353 miles of roads and trails open for yearlong or seasonal motorized use, a reduction of 25 miles from the existing condition. Of the 2,353 miles, 1,963 miles are roads and 390 miles are trails. Each segment of motorized road and trail include a designation of the

type of vehicles which would be allowed. The designations are: all vehicles, vehicles less than 50 inches in width, or motorcycles. In addition, 1,762 miles of road, 693 miles of trails outside of wilderness areas will be open to non-motorized use. Three new connector trails (1.1 miles), proposed by the public will also be added to the trail system. The draft decision also includes monitoring the affect of motor vehicle use on fisheries and heritage resources, and recreational use along the Coolwater Ridge area.

With this proposed decision, no areas will be designated for motorized use. The number of acres restricted from off-route motor vehicle use will change from 228,197 to 1,004,428 acres. Motor vehicle travel off the designated roads and trails would not be allowed. All roads, trails and areas are closed to motorized use unless designated as open.

A change from the current access is the designated season of use on roads and trails. Yearlong motorized use will occur on 846 miles of roads and 88 miles of trails. Seasonal motorized use will occur on 1,117 miles of roads and 302 miles of trails. The proposed decision would increase seasonal use on 198 miles of road and 200 miles of trail from the existing condition.

It also provides non-motorized opportunities on trails in or adjacent to Gospel Hump, Mallard, West Fork–Crooked River, Rapid River, Salmon Face, Selway–Bitterroot, and Silver Creek- Pilot Knob Idaho Roadless Areas.

Road or trail access to private inholdings was a consideration with the decision. Alternative 5, as modified includes changes from Alternative 5, to maintain the same motorized access that is currently provided.

Other key points in the draft decision include:

- Routes not on the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) will no longer be available for motorized use.
- Motor vehicle access for dispersed camping will be allowed up to 300 feet from most designated roads and trails following specific conditions of use; however, dispersed camping is not allowed along 18 miles of roads and 34 miles of trails.
- Parking will be allowed one vehicle length off from designated roads. One vehicle length is defined as the length of a vehicle and a trailer (e.g. boat, horse, or camper). Parking will be allowed only when it is safe to do so without creating resource damage and follow forest orders or prohibitions.
- Terminal facilities, trailheads, parking lots, and turnouts associated with the designated road or trail will be included as open.
- Retrieval of downed big game using motorized vehicles, will be restricted to designated motorized use roads and trails.
- Gathering firewood using motor vehicles will continue to follow the terms of personal use firewood permits.
- The MVUM will be the enforcement tool when the maps are distributed.

The DRAMVU project Final EIS and Draft ROD are posted on the project webpage at:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=17752>. This Final EIS and Draft ROD are subject to the pre-decisional administrative review process (objection process). The notice of availability, published in the *Lewiston Tribune*, starts the official 45-day objection filing period. Only those who have previously

submitted specific written comments regarding the DRAMVU planning effort may file an objection. The objection filing period will be followed by a 45-day objection resolution period.

Once the objection process is completed, the Forest will issue the DRAMVU project Final Record of Decision (Final ROD). From that decision, and other motor vehicle access decisions, the Nez Perce National Forest MVUM for will be prepared. The MVUM will display only the roads and trails which are open to motorized access. It will also include the specific type of vehicles allowed and the season of use. The MVUM will not include over-snow vehicle use or non-motorized use. The MVUM is the legal document that shows what roads and trails are open. The MVUM will be free to the public at local Forest Service Offices and available to view or download from our Forest website. The next article will explain how to read a MVUM and will come out when the MVUMs are available.

For more information, please contact Jennie Fischer, Project Team Leader, at 208-983-4048.

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